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AUTHOR Havighurst, Robert J.
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ABSTRACT

"Politics" is used in a broad sense to refer to the social, economic, political, and civil forces that impinge on the publicly financed school system. These forces are generated both from outside and inside the educational system. It is the author's view that the big cities and the school systems of most of these cities are in just enough trouble to force people to do something about them without delay and that citizens and educators will succeed in clearing up much of the trouble in the next 25 years. After a survey of the past, which shows that city schooling has improved, the author briefly discusses the present before moving to consider the future. He presents five elements to a successful resolution of the problems of big city education: (1) stabilization of school enrollment, (2) achieving a democratic pluralism in school policy and practice, (3) a metropolitan area civil-educational system, (4) an active role for teachers organizations in policy-making, and (5) broad-based planning and changes in the bureaucracy. (Author/IRT)

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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
108th Annual Convention
Atlantic City, N.J. February 20-23, 1976

SPEAKER: Robert J. Havighurst, Professor of Education and Human Development, University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill

TOPIC: The Politics of Big City Education

PLACE: Room 101, Convention Hall

TIME: 9:30 am, Monday, February 23, 1976

PROGRAM: Page 84

Summary of Remarks:

When I speak of the "politics" of education I will focus on the social, economic, political and civic forces that impinge on the public-financed system of education for children and youth from very early pre-school ages up to about age 20. These forces are generated from outside and inside the educational system. From outside, they are the city and state and federal governments; the press, television and radio; the local political and business and labor and civic organizations. From inside, they are the students, the teachers, the administrative staff, the maintenance staff, the school board, and the parents' organizations.

When I speak of "big cities," I will focus on the cities of roughly 300 thousand population and over. This brings us down to the 48th city, Birmingham. The United States has only 3 cities that rank in the top 50 in size throughout the world; and I will certainly tend to stress these three--New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles--as well as Philadelphia, Detroit, Houston, Baltimore, Dallas, Washington, and Cleveland, to name the ten largest.

It is a common belief that our big cities are in trouble, and that the school systems of most of these cities are in trouble. My own view is that they are in just enough trouble to force us to do something about them without delay, and that we will succeed, as citizens and educators, to clear up much of this trouble during the next 25 years.

The seventh annual Gallup Poll on attitudes of the public toward schools tells us that the American adult public has increasingly down-graded the public schools in recent years. When asked to "grade" the public schools with the usual letter grades used in schools to grade the pupils, the residents of communities of 1 million and over gave 11 percent A's, 29 percent B's, 23 percent C's, 9 percent D's and 9 percent F's. These were lower grades than those given by the public in communities of other sizes, which were 43 percent A and B compared with 40 percent from the very large cities. Last year, in 1974, A's and B's were assigned by 48 percent of the public, and much of the reduction from 1974 to 1975 resulted from the negative votes of the big-city residents.

The big city school systems have had poor treatment by the press and television, and I think we may fairly say that the media have suffered for the most part from incompetence on the part of many education writers and commentators, as well as from inability by editorial writers to sense or to ferret out the main issues or the main problems of public education in the big cities. To take an example from what is certainly one of the newspapers with a relatively good record in treating the education news; the New York Times, in an editorial on November 9, 1967, welcomed the report of the McGeorge Bundy citizens' panel recommending decentralization of the city school

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system with the following words:

> If this proposal is radical, it is justified by the fact that the situation is desperate. If the cure is drastic, it is necessary because a long succession of moderate reform efforts has failed to halt the deterioration of New York City's gigantic school system. . .
>
> The Bundy panel has presented a valid alternative to New York City's continued educational crisis and decline. The status quo has been given its chance--and has failed the test of the classroom. Something new and revolutionary is needed. The Bundy report is a brave attempt at an answer.

I have doubts that the very competent Education Editor of the New York Times wrote that piece. His record indicates that he is one of a small number of newspaper education experts who has really studied the problem of urban education and stayed with the problem.

We cannot quarrel with the contention that the school system in New York has then and still has a major problem. But the phrase "deterioration" of New York City's school system implies that the system is at fault, rather than any other possible cause of problems of low school achievement on the part of many school children.

Another example of this kind of shoddy thinking is provided frequently by news commentators who appear to take it for granted that if the average scores on school achievement tests go down from one year to the next and on to the next, the cause must lie in a declining efficiency or competency of the school staff and the school program. For instance, one of the TV stations in Chicago has a series of two- or three- minute "editorials" spoken by a young man who has not impressed the public with any depth of knowledge or analytical power concerning the topics on which he speaks. Several times this man has referred, almost casually, as if it were a matter of common knowledge and belief, to what he speaks of as the "poor quality" of the Chicago Public Schools. This, he says, makes it difficult for the city of Chicago to maintain its business and industry at a prosperous level. Recently, he spoke of the move of some business offices and industries out from the central city to the suburbs, where, he said, they could secure more competent employees, because the suburban schools were better. This is a familiar statement, easy enough to give as an excuse for deserting the central city by a business executive who finds that taxes on business property are less in the suburbs than in the central city, and that some of his middle-level executives would find it more convenient to live in a suburb if their place of work was nearby. The proposition that prospective employees with requisite education would be more plentiful might even have some validity if the business in question was a publishing house or a branch office of an insurance company, where a large proportion of the employees must have clerical skills and office skills. But the vast majority of jobs in a big city do not require more than sixth grade literacy, and do not require vocational high school training.

It probably would seem natural to the average layman to expect that all children except the mentally retarded, will learn to read and write and calculate at an average 8th grade level if they get the "proper" school instruction. Therefore, Mr. Everyman may easily accept the suggestion that the school system is to blame if the test scores show a much lower average level of school achievement for high school youth in the big city. But the education writers know better, if they have followed the research reports of the National Equality of Educational Opportunity Study and a dozen others of that type. Why do they not tell their editorial writers and their reading public that the problem lies primarily in the home and family of the low-achieving child, whose parents, much as they love him and care for him, do not know how to help him learn the habits and attitudes that will enable him to succeed in school? There are a number of reasons for this failure of the media, and they are a part of the politics of big-city education.

Almost everybody who has a public audience and some responsibility for writing or speaking about the school performance of big-city pupils appears to avoid telling the public the truth. Perhaps it is easier to make a scapegoat of the school system, or of the school superintendent. Recently, Barbara Sizemore, after being deposed by the Washington, D.C. School Board from the Superintendency, said in an interview published in the Phi Delta Kappan, "School boards have got to have a superintendent because they've got to have a scapegoat."

Big-city school systems have always had problems; but rural school systems have problems of other kinds. The problems of the big-city system draw more public attention, as would be expected.

In examining the case of the big-city public schools, I propose to discuss the Past, Present, and Future, with most emphasis on the Future--the next 25 years.

Schools in the Big Cities: 1850-1950

The historian Carl Kaestle gives us some information concerning the lives of the people in New York City in the middle of the last century when a public school system was just being started. The population of New York City was about 600,000 in 1950, and grew to 1,360,000 by 1970. Over half of the residents of New York City in 1850 were foreign born. An estimate made in 1854 stated that 31 percent of the population were "destitute," and it was reported in 1847 that one-fourth of the population were receiving some form of charity assistance. A report of the School Board in 1856 stated that "Between 20 thousand and 60 thousand children are being educated on the streets in idleness and vice." In 1869, Matthew Smith wrote that there were 40,000 vagrant poor children, mostly from immigrant families "who are too dirty, too ragged, and carry too much vermin about them, to be admitted to the public schools."

The Chief of New York City Police reported in 1849 that in the eleven police patrol districts of the lower wards at the southern tip of Manhattan, there were 2,970 vagrant children, in the following categories:

Boys loitering around the piers, stealing from ship cargoes and selling to junk shops	770
Beggars in rags, mostly girls	100
Girl prostitutes, masquerading as sellers of fruit & nuts	380
Homeless boys who carried people's luggage for the coins they could get	120
Boys who gathered on street corners, evenings & sundays causing trouble	1,600
	2,970

If we make a crude estimate that there were 350,000 children aged 6 to 15 in New York City about 1860, the 40,000 "vagrant poor children" noted by Matthew Smith amount to 11 percent of that age group.

In those days there were only a few free public schools and school attendance was not compulsory in the big city. But it was conditions like this that led to provision for free public schooling and then to compulsory school attendance. Conditions were similar in the other growing cities. Chicago, in 1850, had 13,500 children in what was thought of as "school age," and 1,919 of them were enrolled in public elementary schools, with somewhat more in private and parochial schools, and thousands in no school at all. In 1860 there were 14,000 children enrolled in public schools, taught by 123 teachers. And there was one high school with about 200 pupils.

The Illinois state legislature in 1883 passed a law requiring compulsory free schooling for children between 8 and 14. This law was not enforced anywhere in the state. In 1888, the Chicago Woman's Club sent a petition to the Chicago Board of Education, saying: "We respectfully ask your honorable body immediately to take the necessary measures to ensure the enforcement of the Illinois Statute of 1883, providing for compulsory education." But the Chicago Times of March 30, 1884 published an editorial claiming that compulsory education and child labor laws would close down manufacturing plants and make children idle and vicious. In the same time, another newspaper, the Chicago Inter Ocean declared, "Compulsory education is preposterous. Education is not necessary for everyone."

Reform as Centralization of Authority, Combined with Expertise: 1880-1920

By the closing decades of the 19th century the big cities were coping with the problems of their school systems largely through a non-planned system of local school boards or school committees, each covering a subdivision of the city--often a ward, with the alderman closely involved in the schools of his district. In addition, the system of Catholic parochial schools had become an important educational asset, and again was organized on the basis of the needs and mores of the local parish. Thus the growing numbers of schools were keeping up with the growing population, and the population growth was due largely to immigrants from foreign countries, relatively few of whom spoke English at home.

A good picture of this complex and rather anarchic situation is given by David Tyack in his book The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education. I shall quote him from time to time in a brief review of the period characterized by a broad movement for reform that had as a model the efficiency and dynamism of the American business corporation, then commencing to convert the United States from an agricultural country producing food and other raw materials to an industrialized and urbanized society.

In most cities there was a large public school board, with members representing local areas, and in some there were "ward boards," with substantial powers. By 1900, there had been wide publicity for several reports by educational reformers who had gone around visiting schools in New York, Chicago, and elsewhere, and had described the circumstances in many very poor schools. There arose a body of professional and business leaders who worked for a structural reform. That is, they proposed that the anarchic, variegated local schools, often mired in local politics for the appointment of teachers and janitors, should be brought together under a single strong city-wide school board with a strong and expert superintendent, who would act in the same role as the president of a corporation who is employed by a board of directors. Sponsors of this kind of reform were such men as President Eliot of Harvard University, Nicholas Murray Butler, of Columbia University, and William Rainey Harper, of the University of Chicago.

In New York City, Nicholas Murray Butler organized a blue-ribbon "Committee of 100" to arouse support in the city and the state legislature for a law that would abolish ward school boards, and centralize the authority in a city-wide school board. They succeeded in 1896. Once the ward boards were abolished, they moved to establish a single educational authority for the 5 consolidated boroughs that made up the City, and they secured the appointment of William Maxwell as superintendent in 1898. This man was a genius as organizer, and he built a massive bureaucracy to operate the vast school system. A year later, President William Rainey Harper of the University of Chicago was appointed by the Mayor to head a Commission to survey the Chicago Public Schools. He brought Superintendent Maxwell to talk with his Commission, and he introduced Mr. Maxwell to a University of Chicago convocation with the statement: "I am convinced that next in difficulty and importance to the work of the President of the United States stands that of the superintendent of schools in our great cities."

The Harper Commission recommended the reduction of the School Board from 21 to 11 members, and the creation of two top administrative positions, Superintendent and Business Manager, each to be appointed for a term of six years. The Commission hoped that these two positions, with greater power and greater permanence, would help to take the schools out of local politics. At the same time, the Harper Commission recommended two moves which were not adopted at the time, but marked its grasp of the complexity of the school system's operations. One recommendation was for the establishment of teachers' councils, with the right to make recommendations directly to the Board of Education. The other was to ask the mayor to appoint "resident commissioners" for terms of 3 years to visit the schools and report to the Board on discipline, sanitation, and the work of the schools. These Commissioners could be lay people who would report public opinion if the experts at the head of the system should lose touch with the people.

In general, the period from 1890 to 1920 saw increased centralization of power and control, with smaller school boards and expert superintendents with greater power. In 1893, the twenty-eight cities of 100,000 or more had 603 central school board members, an average of 21 per city, as well as hundreds of ward board members in some of the largest cities. By 1913, the number of central school board members in those cities had dropped to 264, or 10 per board, and the ward boards had almost disappeared. This meant that the board members became more and more composed of business and professional leaders, who were too busy to conduct much of the detailed business of the schools. Thus the superintendent and his staff became more responsible for the active administration as well as the determination of policy at levels below the most general.

It was clear that the reform of the school system was essentially one of structure. The small board, strong superintendent, and non-political, rational bureaucracy was expected to produce both an efficient school system and efficient citizens.

In 1912, two leaders among the professional educators, David Snedden (Commissioner of Education for the State of Massachusetts) and Samuel Dutton (Professor of Educational Administration at Teachers College, Columbia University) looked at the movement to centralize control of schools and concluded that "no one can deny that under existing conditions the very salvation of our cities depends upon the ability of legislatures to enact such provisions as will safeguard the rights of citizens, take the government from ignorant and irresponsible politicians, and place it in the hands of honest and competent experts." (Tyack, p. 131), Tyack summarizes the situation as of 1910 to 1920 by presenting the view of the big city school superintendent and of the university professor of educational administration as follows: "To many schoolmen the corporate model of school governance was not only 'modern and rational' but the answer to many of their biggest problems. They wished to gain high status for the superintendent—and here he was compared with that prestigious figure, the business executive. They were tired of 'politics' which endangered

their tenure and sabotaged their attempts to improve the system--and here was a board that promised to be 'above politics.' They wanted to make of school administration a science--and here was a ready-to-use body of literature on business efficiency to adapt to the schools. The administrative progressives were "quick to develop the implications of the corporate model and to anticipate possible objections to it on democratic grounds. Whereas in the past they often used loose factory analogies for the public schools, they were now quite precise in drawing a strict parallel between the governance of business corporations and the governance of schools." (p. 143-144)

Still, the schools were so close to the personal and family lives of the urban population that they could not possible be operated on the same plan as a factory or a business, to process human raw material or to buy teaching and sell lessons. In spite of a general tendency to think and act as if the school system was the major force of a "melting-pot" policy to Americanize the foreign-born and to train competent workers at all levels of skill, the American society was pluralistic, and tended to favor pluralistic educational policy . For instance, the Germans, with relatively high economic status and political power in the big midwestern cities, held out for courses in German in grades 5 to 12 of the elementary and high schools. In Chicago, Tyack reports, in 1900, the enrollment in grades 5-12 was 40,225; and 34,232 of this number were taking German courses, though slightly under half of them were of German parentage. And Chicago politics for the first 40 years of the century was marked by competition among politicians for the German and the Polish vote.

The Urban School Crisis: 1950-1980

Certainly the public statistics of school attendance and school support in the year 1950 would seem to justify the claim that the reform of big-city school systems which apparently succeeded by 1920-1930 had been justified by the performance of the schools.

The 50 years from 1900 to 1950 had seen the following gains: proportion of youth aged 14-17 enrolled in secondary schools, from 11 to 77 percent; percent graduating from secondary school, from 6 to 59 percent. The ratio of the average salaries of public school teachers to average earnings of all full-time workers rose from 1.02 in 1929-30 to 1.12 in 1959-60, and the purchasing power of the income had risen substantially for all workers. The expenditure of the American society on elementary and secondary schools (public and private) increased from $252 millions in 1899-1900 to $18 billion in 1959-60. Teachers had more years of training, there were many new buildings, curriculum had expanded in numbers of vocational courses, and classes for gifted children.

Yet, by 1960, and even more since then, we speak of an urban school crisis. The reason we call this a period of crisis is that bad things are happening in our schools and to our students and teachers. More important, probably,is the fact that our schools do not seem to be succeeding in the tasks we have assigned to them. At the same time, our schools cost much more than they did only a couple of decades ago. Without going into great detail, we may list the major elements and the train of events that have produced the crisis.

For the past 35 years, since about 1940, there has been a vast migration of blacks to the big urban centers, and especially to the northern industrial centers. Although the big cities have grown largely through immigration since 1840, the white immigrants from Europe offered less of a problem to the Anglo population than have the black immigrants from the rural South.

During this same period, the central or inner city parts of the big metropolitan areas have been losing population due to moves out from the central city to a suburb. The relative numbers in the suburbs have increased dramatically. Also, the income and socioeconomic level of dwellers in the central cities have decreased in relation to these characteristics of the suburbs. For instance, the Socioeconomic Ratio which I have computed for male workers in the Chicago City and Metropolitan Area shows this clearly. The SER is a proportion of male white-collar workers to blue-collar or manual workers. Between 1940 and 1970 this SER for the entire Chicago Metropolitan area rose from .71 to .97, due to the nation-wide increase in proportions of white-collar jobs in the labor force. In the City of Chicago, this SER decreased from .69 in 1940 to .66 in 1970; but for the Chicago suburbs, the SER increased from .77 in 1940 to 1.36 in 1970. This of course means that the public school children in the City of Chicago come increasingly from manual working-class families, while the school children in the suburbs come increasingly from white-collar families.

After 1960, our government embarked on the War on Poverty which naturally involved the schools with the expectation that more of certain kinds of education would raise the income level of the lower-working class. Shortly after this, the Civil Rights Act was passed, and this high-lighted the problem of racial segregation in the public schools, South and North.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 brought over a billion dollars a year to supplement public school expenditures in low-income areas. The Head Start Program promised to bring most big-city children to the First Grade, ready to read. Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provided funds for innovative projects in school systems.

There was a substantial flow of money into the big city schools, enough to encourage optimism concerning outcomes of the new programs.

Furthermore, the Supreme Court Decision of 1954 on racial segregation in the public schools was about to be enforced in the big cities, with pressure from the black citizens' organizations and good will from the professional educators. At about this time, 1965, the big cities began to publish the results of standardized testing of their pupils, tied to data on the racial composition of the separate schools.

Then, in the years 1965 and 1966, there was a sharp change of climate, which took the professional leaders of big city schools by surprise. The first evidence was the Black Power movement, which embarked on a militant separatist course, withdrawing its pressure for immediate desegregation of the city schools. Instead, the separatist black movement worked for more black leadership in the schools, more emphasis on black culture in the curriculum, and opposed the kind of bussing programs that placed the burden mainly on black families and children to accept bussing to schools far distant from their homes. The black citizens' organizations were divided in their attitudes toward Black Power activity.

Local Community Control. For better or for worse, and the verdict of history cannot yet be read on this issue, the black and the other minority groups chose to militate for local community control of the public schools. By this time the report of the federal government study of Equality of Educational Opportunity, authored and directed by Professor James S. Coleman, pointed out that the performance of school children on standardized tests was less connected to school expenditures, experience and educational level of teachers, than it was to the socioeconomic status of the children's families. But nobody in the educational system with responsibility for making the system work could simply sit back and say to the parents of low-achieving pupils, "It is your fault. We are doing the best we can for your children. You must create and maintain a better situation at home and in your local neighborhood for teaching your children

the motives and habits that will enable them to work better in the system."

It was difficult and perhaps impossible for the educational Establishment—the Superintendents, Administrators, and Professors of Educational Administration—to produce any solutions to the crisis which would command general public support. The situation was wide open for the critics of the Establishment, and they were not slow to speak. The critics consisted of two groups of people. One group defined the problem as a product of a massive, rigid bureaucracy. The clearest and I believe the most effective exponent of this view was Michael Katz, whose book, Class, Bureaucracy and the Schools: The Illusion of Educational Change in America was published in 1971. He criticised the "experts" who were in high administrative posts. "Bureaucratization has lessened their sensitivity to their communities, to their students, and to the informed and constructive criticism that would make progress possible. American education still lacks a real alternative model to hierarchical bureaucracy. One consequence of bureaucratization, Amitai Etzioni has pointed out, is the separation of consumption, those who are served by an organization, from control, those who direct it." (p.103)

Thus, the issue of cultural pluralism was back, supported now not only by a variety of minority culture groups, but also by some members of the educational profession.

The call came, then, for decentralization, or local community control of educational policy-making and administration in the big city. This first became a public issue in New York City in 1967, when the New York City Board of Education set aside three areas of the city for an experiment in local community participation in the operation of the schools. Two of the "demonstration areas" were black and Puerto Rican in composition, and the other was Chinese and Puerto Rican. The Ford Foundation provided funds for Professor Marilyn Gittell, a social scientist at Queens College, to advise and assist these projects. At the same time, Mayor Lindsay appointed an Advisory Panel, whose Chairman was President McGeorge Bundy of the Ford Foundation, to advise on the problems of the New York City School System. This Panel reported in autumn of 1967, under the title, Reconnection for Learning, and proposed that the school system be subdivided into at least 30 community school districts with elementary school boards which would be largely independent of the New York City School Board. In the end, the New York State Legislature in 1969 directed the New York City Board of Education to create 30 to 33 community districts, each with an elected community board with substantial powers over the elementary school, but not the high schools.

During this period, there was an extended teachers' strike, with the United Federation of Teachers opposing the community school system. The community districts were created with boundaries that tended to preserve minority segregation. And the performance of school children on standardized tests did not improve. Dr. Gittell, very much in favor of local community control, wrote a long article in 1968 entitled "The Balance of Power and the Community School." She takes a realistic position with respect to the use of their power by minority groups. The local community board will want a strong role in the appointment of school principals and teachers, including a preference for personnel of the dominant minority group. She suggests that elected members of the community school boards should be paid for their services, for they are likely to be working-class men or women, who cannot afford to give their time freely, as can board members in middle-class communities.

The movement for local community control grew powerfully in many of the large cities, after 1965. Detroit went through a period of local dissension over problems of racial segregation, and eventually the Michigan State Legislature in 1969 passed a law dividing the Detroit School District into 8 regions, each with an elected

regional school board. The Central School Board is made up of 13 persons, one each from the eight regional boards, and five elected from the city at large.

These two areas, New York City and Detroit, are examples of political decentralisation, with a maximum of local community control. They are somewhat contrasted with a program of administrative decentralization, which has taken place during the same period in a number of large cities. In the latter type of decentralization, the central school board retains authority over the entire school system, but sets up a number of local advisory councils chosen by local communities to work with the staff of the school and then often with the district superintendent. Chicago and Los Angeles have taken this course. Some of the advisory councils have asserted themselves vigorously enough to cause the removal of school principals or the choice of new principals and teachers who are regarded as more in harmony with the minority groups which are strongest in the local schools.

As of 1976, it seems that the school systems are still in a state of crisis in big cities that have militant minority groups with substantial political power. There are several potent socio-political forces which are either opposing one another or at least not working together. For instance, the teachers unions are attempting to hold the economic gains they made in the 1960s, when school enrollments were rising rapidly and there was a shortage of teachers. Collective bargaining brought the teachers substantial economic gains. Now, with school enrollments decreasing, and the public worried about increasing taxes, the teachers are having difficulty. More than one in four members of the American Federation of Teachers were on strike at some time between September, 1965 and the end of the calendar year.

The press and television still (with a few exceptions) seem unable to view and describe the big city schools in terms of the real issues and the real problems.

THE FUTURE: THE NEXT 25 YEARS

When I say that the problems and failures of the 1950-1980 big city school crisis will be solved constructively during the remaining years of this century, I am not only being optimistic, I am also counting on our using the experience of the past 100 years to avoid repeating the mistakes we made earlier. Also I am counting on the business interests and the political and civic organizations to take the lead in solving our pressing urban problems.

There are five elements to a successful resolution of the problems of big city education.

1. Stabilisation of school enrollments. The slight decline of school enrollments since about 1970 will soon be over; by 1980 there will be slight increases, as the women born in such large numbers during the 1954-61 period have their children. The best estimate we can make now is that this cohort of women will have just about enough children to replace their numbers. And this will mean a slow increase from 1980 to 2000, with no great added financial load.

2. Achieving a democratic pluralism in school policy and practice. The minority groups which exerted large separatist forces in the 1960-75 period will be treated more fairly and more efficiently--expecially the economically disadvantaged. Tyack sees administrative decentralisation already working better. "To succeed in improving the schooling of the dispossessed, educators are increasingly realising that they need to share power over educational decision-making with representations of urban communities they serve, that they need to find ways to teach that

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match the learning styles of the many ethnic groups, that they need to develop many alternatives within the system to correct the many dysfunctions of the vast bureaucracies" of the early decades of this century. (p.291). On the other hand, the leaders of minority groups will accept more responsibility for low achievement of some of their children, instead of blaming this on the schools. This is illustrated by a column written by the black columnist Carl Rowan, and printed in the Chicago Daily News on January 2, 1976. Entitled "Compensatory education helps," the article interprets the findings of a General Accounting Office report on the 10 years of special programs for disadvantaged children, financed by the federal government under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The GAO report said, with respect to students aided by Title I funds, "most of the students were not reading at levels sufficient for them to begin to close the gap between their reading and the national norm." Rowan says, "You must begin with an understanding that we are talking about seven million children who, with rare exceptions, have grown up in poverty, hunger, sickness and a stifling home environment, which is bereft of guidance or motivation." He cites the GAO report quoting state education officials as declaring Title I reading programs are successful because: "more than "50 percent of the participants gained above the national average," and "35 percent of the deprived youngsters actually were closing the reading gap while 6 percent were holding even with the national norm."

Again, an educational leader who comes from the Spanish-American minority, Dean Arciniega of the School of Education at San Diego State University, has written, "If America is to fulfill its dream of equality, it must begin with schools that promote and reflect a culturally pluralistic society."

The pervasive problem of achieving racial integration in the big cities is not going to be solved by a blanket program of bussing to balance the proportions of black and white in all schools, although bussing will be used constructively. Probably a policy will be developed to give each child the option between attending his neighborhood school, regardless of its enrollment mixture, and attending an integrated "magnet school," which offers special facilities and provides free bus transportation between home and school.

3. A Metropolitan Area civic-educational system. The big cities will move substantially toward bringing the central city and the suburbs into close collaboration. This may be done in a variety of ways, and will be a principal aim of municipal government reform. It may take the form of metro government--the coalescence of central city and suburbs into a single area-wide or county-wide government unit. On the other hand, it may be limited to a closer coordination through a variety of agreements.

This proposition denies the validity of the statement that the big city school system drives people out of the central city and into the suburbs. No doubt this figures to some extent in the decisions of some people to move to a suburb. But, basically, it is not the city schools that drive people out of the cities; it is the cities with their complex of problems. The recent article in Harpers Magazine, entitled "The Worst American City," gives the "vital statistics" of the fifty largest American cities. As one reads the record, one sees that crime is probably the major factor in determining the "quality of life" in those cities.

The composite or global ratings place the following cities at the top of the list, in this order: Seattle, Tulsa, San Diego, San Jose, Honolulu, Portland (Oregon), Denver, Minneapolis, Oklahoma City, Omaha. The author notes that several of those cities have expanded their boundaries by annexing suburbs, or they originally covered an extensive area of open land which became suburbs. He says, "By absorbing suburbs, with their lower crime rates, greater affluence and better health and housing conditions, a city can dramatically improve its vital statistics." (p.71).

Clearly, as educators, we cannot simply wait for municipal reformers to do the job of improving the quality of life in the central cities, assuming that the schools will improve as a natural result. Educators will work for greater collaboration of central city and suburban school systems, on a voluntary basis if the state legislatures do not pass laws which combine central city and suburban districts in larger districts for the purpose of improving educational opportunity and protecting the civil rights of children and youth.

A significant move in this direction was signalled by Neil Sullivan, Massachusetts Commissioner of Education, in his March, 1972 meeting with administrators of 46 school districts in Greater Boston. He announced the support of the State Department of Education for what he called an Educational Collaborative of the Greater Boston Area, with two goals: (a) to reduce fiscal inequalities among neighboring school systems, and (b) to profide richer learning experiences for children of diverse family backgrounds.

4. Teachers Organizations will have an active role in making policy. The crisis of the 1950-1980 period has given the teachers much more power, exerted through their organizations. Commencing with a period of major economic gains during the teacher shortage of the 1950s and 1960s, the teachers' organizations became involved in the critical issues of the mid-1960s, generally resisting local community control. Then the surplus of people licensed to teach weakened the collective bargaining power of the organizations, and in some areas placed the teachers in an unfavorable position in the eyes of the public. With a reduction in the numbers of young people preparing to become teachers, and with the prospect of a slowly growing school enrollment for the next 25 years, the teachers organizations will be in a good position to make their professional contribution to solution of big-city problems.

Possibly the tendency toward collaboration between city and suburban school systems, and toward unification into metropolitan area systems, will give teachers' organization leaders and school administrators more of a common interest in meeting the policy problems of the next 20 years.

5. Bureaucracy and Planning. Tyack closes his book on urban schools with the sentence: "To create urban schools which really teach students, which reflect the pluralism of the society, which serve the quest for social justice--this is a task which will take persistent imagination, wisdom, and will." (p.291)

I believe this thoroughly, and I believe it can only be achieved through a strong school administration, with power over a wide population area, preferably a metropolitan area, with a strong planning function, and with a bureaucracy.
There has been a plethora of critics, using separatist and local community control arguments, who see the major flaws in the bureaucratic structures that for a while seemed successful in the early decades of this century. But the problem of big city public schools cannot be solved by radical decentralization and local community minority control.

There must be planning on a broad base. There must be power in the hands of central administrative and policy-making school districts. The narrower interests and specific needs of central city minority groups and of suburban districts must be reconciled for the greater good of the entire society, though it will and should continue to be pluralistic and democratic. The educational administrator must make the bureaucracy flexible and planful, with a good deal of administrative delegation of responsibility and decentralized responsibility.

The educational administrators and the school boards have to use power skilfully and flexibly in order to maintain a democratic structure which meets the needs of a pluralistic society during the remainder of the century.

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